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THE POSSIBILITIES OF AN OLD BUREAU.

By JAMES THOMSON.

THE utilization of old furniture in furnishing the home has not received that attention which as a measure of economy it is entitled. The possibilities of an old chest of drawers that has outlasted its usefulness as such, has seemingly remained undiscovered to many persons. While the new uses to which it can be put are manifold, space will only permit pointing out a few of the most useful.

A very good hall seat may be fashioned from any ordinary bureau. That shown in Fig. 1, was made from one of those swell front affairs, so familiar in New England homes of the past, but of course any similar shape or pattern would be equally fitting. To make the change, it is necessary to remove the upper drawers, upholstering the space left thereby—seat, sides and back. The flat top of the bureau of course will not be required as such, and can be utilized as a seat by cutting to the proper size and nailing in place. The cushion may be removable and can be covered with denim, jute, velour or corduroy to suit one's purse. The back and sides should be padded, covering with the same material as cushion. Finish the edges neatly with gimp of suitable color or small brass headed nails. Should the wood be dark mahogany any of the shades of denim now offered will answer admirably and the pillows and bolsters if used may be decorated to advantage with outline designs. The suggestion of using so humble a material as denim is with a view to economy; more costly material may be employed when desired.

A very handsome little settle may be fitted up in a parlor in much the same manner. Fig. 2 illustrates what may be done in this direction. Have the bureau well scraped so as to remove all of the old finish. After the cabinet work is effected give

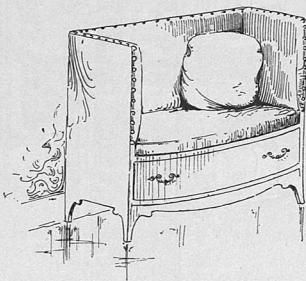


FIG. 1. HALL SEAT MADE FROM BUREAU.

three coats of inside white paint laid on evenly, finishing off with one or two coats of white enamel. The settle as shown here has been decorated with papier mache or composition ornaments, which can be applied with glue and nailed in place to suit one's fancy. When hard, these ornaments may be softened by wrapping in a cloth, wrung out in hot water, after which they may be twisted to any design required. House decorators and picture framers are large users of such material and amateurs may purchase of them. When such orna-

mentation is attempted it should always be previous to the painting, and may after this latter process is effected be further touched up with gold paint. A beautiful white and gold divan of small dimensions, particularly well adapted for placing against the back of an upright piano can be gotten up in this manner at small expense. Upholstering of silken texture and cushions of India silk will complete the ensemble.

A very convenient side table or buffet may be likewise worked out from a bureau. Fig. 3 depicting one of the forms most available. The middle drawers are removed and a curtain to run on a rod substituted, putting a bottom over the

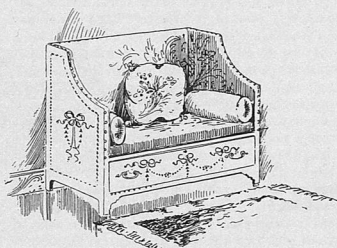


FIG. 2. PARLOR SEAT MADE FROM OLD BUREAU.

remaining drawers. A board of pine or poplar stained to match woodwork and finished with shellac should be made to overhang as shown, 6 or 8 inches on either end, thus adding that much to available space. The upper shelves may be of pine stained and should be in width about half that of the top of case. Should this be 20 inches from back to front make the shelves 10 inches. The upright turned posts may be of 1½ inch or 1½ inch poles which come already finished, cutting to the necessary lengths. A mirror in a plain frame may be procured, or India silk can be shirred on brass rods to form a very nice background. Common silkline makes a very good substitute for the silk. Another very good background is formed by covering a board with muslin and afterwards pasting some pretty wall paper over it, the Japanese leather paper with bronze figures being especially effective. To those who have the talent for painting on tapestry or burlap it will not be necessary to do more than suggest the back of such a buffet as a suitable subject for such experiments. Of course, after all is said, nothing can equal the reflective qualities of a mirror in showing off a side-board to advantage.

DOMESTIC DECORATION.

ELEGANCE THAT DOES NOT OVERRIDE COMFORT.—EASY SUBSTANTIAL FURNISHINGS THAT CAN BE OBTAINED AT LOW COST.

IN furnishing a house the first thing to be done is to decorate the walls and ceilings, if they are not already decorated. The different rooms of the home demand different styles and designs, and in choosing patterns for ordinary small homes, small designs and light tints are best. American designs in wall paper are best, because foreign papers, especially the English, pre-suppose large rooms,

and the designs are so large that they do not relieve or emphasize small walls sufficiently.

SUITABLE DESIGNS FOR THE VARIOUS APARTMENTS.

For the walls of dining-rooms arabesque and geometrical designs are peculiarly suitable, and their richness in color should be chosen with regard to the outlook and lightness of the room. Pale, soft tints and graceful intermingling patterns are not in order. The drawing-room requires richer designs, to harmonize with the other furnishings of the room. Plain ingrain, or cartridge papers are suitable for such rooms, as they give a softer and less monotonous tone than painted walls, the fibre of the paper showing through the color. Glazed tile papers, that can be cleaned with soap and water can be used equally well in the kitchen, laundry or servant's quarters, although, in such places, wall paper is usually supplanted by paint.

THE HALL.

Most halls, both in city and country houses, are merely passage-ways, designed to give access to the various rooms and floors, while using up as little space as possible. The hall, which is the entrance to the house, should be at once cheerful and dignified in its aspect. Where it can be possibly accomplished, a portion of the hall should be made into a vestibule. The vestibule door should have its upper panel of glass, either stained or ground, so that during the day light from the outside may pour into the hall. If the glass be transparent, and is not stained glass, a curtain light in coloring, and thin in texture, may be luffed upon rods, and for this purpose, madras, scrim, dotted muslin and printed silk are well adapted.

The great idea in a hall is to obtain as much light as possible, so as to destroy its sombreness, and take away the effect of its being simply a dark tunnel. Here, when kalsomine be chosen for the

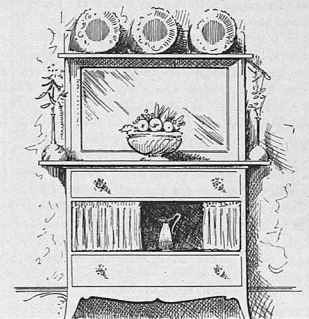


FIG. 3. SIDE TABLE OR BUFFET.

wall, the color should be light and warm. Indian yellow, Venetian red, buffs, light terra cottas, or grays with warm lights in reds are the best colors for the hall. Paper is the most decorative wall finish, as its design relieves the barrenness of the long space; but, to be in keeping with the formal character of the hall, the design should be geometrical, and not floral. It should be bold and distinct, and not fine and delicate. The patterns in Arabic or Greek figures are particularly well suited